

## 23) TWTD Issue 77, May 2005: "Raydon achieve earliest clinching of title"

Contributed by Daniel Harvey And James Powell  
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Malcolm Baggio, the amazing magician of Raydon, has been practising his latest dazzling magic trick just for you. Dressed all in black and wearing silk white gloves, he whips out his huge news-wand and takes off his top hat. The hat appears to be completely empty, but when he waves the wand over the hat, out pops a colourful explosion of football ramblings for you. So go &lsquo;ooh&rsquo; and &lsquo;ahh&rsquo; and applaud wildly as you marvel over the magic and catch up with the latest goings on at the &lsquo;magic circle&rsquo; that is Raydon Athletic Football Club.

As usual, Raydon Athletic players got well and truly into the spirit of Comic Relief this year, arranging several events to raise money for the cause. Fundraising included a sponsored &lsquo;normal training session as usual&rsquo; whilst millionaire Chairman Lionel Stubbs did his bit by organising a collage of 50 pictures of his distant relatives. Players then had to pay 10p for a go at guessing their names, based purely on their appearance. The winner\*, or whoever got closest, won three quarters of the money raised.

The main event, however, was the &ldquo;Miscellaneous Tucker Trial&rdquo; &ndash; based on the Bush Tucker Trial from the TV show &ldquo;I&rsquo;m a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here&rdquo;. Roland Peters, Derek Diffydale, Mansley Kilkorkey and George Mnunga took part, consuming a wide array of strange items. Each had to gorge on a ladle full of polystyrene chippings, a 10cm cube of balsa wood, £1 in coppers, a medium nylon blue t-shirt, a cactus, a blank 3 hour VHS video cassette, a kilo of putrid raw Cumberland sausage meat, a bowl of twigs, a pint of live sparrows, a steam iron, a standard London housebrick, four ramekin dishes full of deep-fried frogspawn and a turd. Well done to all who took part and particular congratulations to George Mnunga not only ate his entire allocation of items but also finished off the other three competitors leftovers before going home and gorging on a massive pizza.

Raydon had the opportunity to break the record for the earliest clinching of the Courts Mammoth Superstore League title when they faced Sporting Sproughton &ndash; their seventh from last game of the season &ndash; at the end of March.

Manager Roland Peters had warned his players against complacency prior to the game. However when it came to the crunch, he happily joined the squad for several pre-match pints in the local pub to celebrate the supposed formality of Raydon winning the game and making history. The players got changed into their kits in the pub to avoid wasting valuable beer-drinking time and they arrived at the ground just three minutes before the scheduled kick off, several of them still carrying half finished pints.

The pub-visit soon began to look somewhat mis-judged. Raydon's one-armed keeper Ian Buffalo didn't realise that he had left his false arm in the pub until a left wing cross was floated into his area and he tried to punch it clear with his missing arm. The ball dropped at the feet of a Sproughton striker who knocked the ball home beautifully from 19.42 centimetres.

Buffalo had removed his arm in the pub during a game of pool so that his colleagues could use it as a makeshift rest. Unfortunately he had left it on the side of the pool table when the players had hastily departed and Roland Peters now had to quickly run back to the pub to retrieve it.

Sproughton took advantage of Buffalo's missing arm and started to shoot on sight, aiming for the hapless Buffalo's armless side. Raydon found themselves 4-0 down before Peters returned with the arm for Buffalo to re-attach. It would have been more if it weren&rsquo;t for several fine saves from Buffalo, one of which featured him forcing the ball over his own bar with an overhead kick to deal with an awkward 30-yard piledriver.

Five minutes before half time there was an incident of real controversy. Raydon's Les Candlestick fired in a 20-yard drive after the ball had rebounded to him from a goal-mouth scramble. A defender on the line managed to stick out a leg and deflect the ball away for a corner although it appeared that the ball had crossed the line. The referee consulted a linesman who was unable to confirm whether it had or not. However, Raydon Chairman Lionel Stubbs happened to have his camera with him to take various action shots for use in a future club magazine. He claimed to have taken a photo just as the defender had cleared Candlestick's shot. Stubbs and Peters managed to persuade the referee to delay the game to allow Stubbs to take the film into Boots to be developed. There were still 19 unused exposures left on the film and Stubbs took 20 minutes organising photographs of various different permutations of players to use up the film, much to the annoyance of the Sproughton contingent.

There was a further two hour delay while Stubbs drove into town to get the film developed. He eventually returned with the photos and the picture clearly showed that the ball had not crossed the line when the defender had cleared it. However, Stubbs was keen to point out to the referee an earlier photo he had taken which revealed a Sproughton player had handled the ball in his own area in only the second minute of the game. The referee duly wiped out Sproughton's four goals and restarted play from two minutes with a Raydon penalty which Dougie McManahammond drilled home easily to put Raydon 1-0 ahead.

What the referee didn't know was that Stubbs had removed three photos from the set: one showed Buster Davonhaddock throttling an opposing striker, one showed Andy Slipper beating an opponent round the shins with a corner flag and a third showed Fitzroy Fitzphillips ripping an opponent's hair out with his teeth when challenging for a high ball.

Buoyed by the second chance they been handed and with the effects of the lunch time beer session now wearing off and having endured a relentless verbal grilling from Peters throughout the entire 2-hour delay in action, the Raydon players started to turn on the style. Dougie McManahammond shepherded the ball over the goal-line for a second midway through the first half, the scorer of which was Les Candlestick. Buster Davonhaddock got in on the act on 44 minutes, passing the ball to Saul Quan who passed to Fitzroy Fitzphillips who passed to Andy Slipper who knocked the ball back to keeper Ian Buffalo. Buffalo launched the ball upfield, Mackinackie flicked it on and McManahammond tapped home from 35 yards.

The second half continued in the same vein with further goals from Mnunga, Quan and McManahammond making the final score 6-0 to Raydon. The second half was memorable for a marathon goal mouth scramble in the Raydon area which lasted 8 minutes, involved all 22 players and featured 19 goal line clearances and 7 diving saves from Ian Buffalo. The scramble ended when McManahammond scampered away from the melee with the ball, ran the entire length of the pitch and walked the ball over the Sproughton goal-line.

With the Championship having been secured and history made, the Raydon players celebrated in style, heading back to the local pub to get, as Peters eloquently put it, 'more shit-faced than any post-war Raydon team has ever got.' Despite seeing the state they were in before the match, the landlord had anticipated their victory and had put up special limited edition bunting for their celebration and rung the brewers out of hours emergency number to get some extra beer sent to the pub.

After the victory over Sproughton, Raydon took their foot off the pedal and failed to pick up another point, score another goal or complete three consecutive passes for the rest of the season and ended up winning the title by just a single point and with a minus Goal difference

\*The winner was Dougie McMannahammond who guessed one name right &ndash; that of Stubb's nephew-in-law, Zak.